

Dear Judge Simon,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the proposed amendments to the police oversight system established by Measure 26-217, which passed with overwhelming public support in November 2020. Measure 26-217 was designed to create a truly independent police oversight board with the power to hold law enforcement accountable and recommend policy changes to the Portland Police Bureau (PPB) and the City Council. However, the amendments recently approved by the City Council significantly undermine the will of the voters and the integrity of this oversight system.

The Police Accountability Commission, a diverse group representing all political backgrounds, spent 20 months carefully crafting a plan that would ensure meaningful and independent oversight of the PPB. Unfortunately, the version presented and approved by the City Council in November 2023 is a watered-down version that fails to meet the standards of fairness, adequacy, and reasonableness as required by the DOJ Settlement Agreement.

It is clear that these amendments do not align with the intention of Measure 26-217. They limit the power of the oversight board and allow for continued police influence over a body that was supposed to be independent. This is not what the voters demanded, and it is not what will lead to meaningful police reform in Portland.

I urge you, Judge Simon, to reject these amendments as they stand and ensure that any changes to the oversight board truly support, rather than undermine, the goal of fair, adequate, and reasonable oversight of the Portland Police Bureau. The amendments should empower the board to effectively hold law enforcement accountable and represent the will of the people who voted for this measure.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Chris Olson (he/him)
Candidate for Portland City Council, District 2